THE POCAHONTAS TIMES

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CALVIN W. PRICE, EDITOR.

THURSDAY, MAY, 16 1918

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The Coal & Iron. What a vision of wealth and prosperity that name once conjured. How the votes rolled out of Fur Fork and swept the county into the Republican column.

Towns sprang up and the drummer walked the railroad from one town to the other with his grip when the trains did not run to suit. Even as they do on Loup Creek where the coal miners congregate. The towns of Olive, Braucher, Burner, May, Gertrude, Wildell, and Oxley occupied the sixteen miles of river and railroad which lies between Durbin and the divide, where the Greenbrier river heads, and Randolph county begins. That is the part of the Cold & Barren which lies in Pocahontas county. That rich territory wrested

the divide, where the Greenbrier river heads, and Randolph county begins. That is the part of the Cold & Barren which lies in Pocahontas county. That rich territory wrested from Randolph county by arbitration in the eighties. We have a sovereignity over that neck of woods, but no treaty rights for the rich and arrogant county of Randolph enraged at the outcome of her contest with the pastoral people of Pocahontas, refused to record the findings of the court.

It is true that landed proprietors holding under the Crown had to recognize the Convention to have an act of the Legislature passed to insure quiet title and possession just like the Scottish chiefs used to have to do after a change in the government.

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It is true that landed proprietors holding under the Crown had to recognize the Convention to have an act of the Legislature passed to insure quiet title and possession just like the Scottish chiefs used to have to do after a change in the government.

This threw to Pocahontas a big boundary of spruce and hemlock forest country so rich in timber as to render it worthless for anything else.

It was into this country, the towns mentioned above sprang up and flourished between the years 1903 and 1915, but they are gone now like Ninevah and Tyre.

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We knew that the change had taken place. That no less than seven postoffices had been allowed to lapse, but we did not realize how great the change was until last week when we traveled through that desolate country over the well kept Western Maryland railroad.

There once was a forest here that was fairly black with rich colored evergreen. Now it is a waste land. It looks brown and a small tree known as round wood is springing up. It is all the difference between poverty and wealth, between the big woods and the brush.

The clear mountain streams flow

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The clear mountain streams flow between beautiful green banks and look like the sweet waters they are. To a stranger there would be nothing unusual in the country for barren hills are the rule and not the exception in most mountain regions, but

the old timer knits his brows at the purling brooks, and thinks of the big trees.

It probably took a hundred thousand years to build up those forests. The slow process of erosion and natural selection, decay, and enrichment went on. Then came a period of ten years in which men took off the luxuriant tree growth, and perhaps in another hundred thousand years another crop will be ready. An evergreen cutting does not repair itself like that of the deciduous hardwood forests. When a spruce country is cut over nothing but intensive tree planting will restore it.

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forests. When a spruce country is cut over nothing but intensive tree planting will restore it.

The wonder is that in all that great lapse of time, the present generation should have been the one to have lived just at the harvest time

Some aeons ago said about the year 99,999 B. C., the chances of any particular persons being on duty on earth between the years 1903-1915 A. D. would have looked like a chance so slim as not to be worth considering.

Just like the chance of any of the elect seeing Moses in the hereafter. The departed man, the story runs, upon his arrival in Heaven expressed a desire to see Moses. But Heaven was so big and so densely populated

Just like the chance of any of the elect seeing Moses in the hereafter. The departed man, the story runs, upon his arrival in Heaven expressed a desire to see Moses. But Heaven was so big and so densely populated that at the nearest he ever came to seeing Moses was in the course of years to meet a man who had talked to a man who had heard a man say that he saw the place where Moses once stood.

Has the experience of seeing the primeval forest destroyed been grievous or glad? We answer that the present generation is more to us than any that went before and more to us than any yet to come, so we are as much entitled to these cedars of Lebanan to build our temples as any other generation at any other time.

There was once a man by the name of Henry Phillips who was looking after this land in the seventeen-ninneties. He found the surveyor of Bath county living at Marlins Bottom, and through his labors he surveyed out 41,000 acres at the head waters of Greenbrier River and this

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The surveyor of Bath county, one William Poage treated it as belonging to Bath county, but even in those days Randolph laid claim to it as it is shown that a Randolph surveyor made a survey of 31,000 acres for Richard Smyth about the same time, which interfered, interlocked and

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It was this abominable tangle of lines that caused Thomas Jefferson to see that the Northwest Territory was laid out like a checker board, and it was by reason of that lesson that you go to the west to find definite surveys and to Virginia for wonderful land lawyers.

Henry Phillips having acquired this land, paid little or no attention to it, not even paying the paltry taxes assessed against it. With other large surveys it lay idle and useless.

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The legislature of Virginia finding that such large grants hindered the development cast about for a remedy, and evolved the law of forfeiture, which was a pretty bright thought considering that on no other part of the world's surface was there such a total disregard for land once acquired.

So in the eighteen-thirties and eighteen-forties, they began to cut up these lands and sell them for the benefit of the school fund.

The Phillips 41,000 acres offered a fair subject for the new law, and it was cut up and sold to the highest bidders and when it was all tolled up the various parcels as bid in showed that the 41,000 acres brought $212.00 which was about the cost of

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On the titles based on this sale the land rose in value until it was worth something like five million dollars in one day and this for the timber alone and is now that the timber has been cut held at something like five dollars an acre, as good strong land suitable for grazing.

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The work of some surveyor on this Phillips tract in the old days developed an interesting example of the dilliculties that the magnetic needle sets in the course of time. This is called the variation of the needle. In the beginning north there is a drifting magnetic pole that moves east for a while and then moves back and crosses the true north line and wanders west, and every little palpitating magnetic needle hung on a pivot thousands of miles away, follows it and points to it in a truly idiotic way. What the pole is or why it travels, no man can say but woe to the surveyor who does not allow for the deflection of the needle by the course of time. The further he goes the wider the mark.

The western boundary of the old Henry Phillips 41,000 acres is about seven miles long. One surveyor, who sought to establish the corners, started at the beginning corner and ran by the same degree called for in the papers. He took no thought of time, and if he had ever been instructed in

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All these years the faithful compass had been "where thou goest I will go," and the result was that the lack of co-ordination on the part of the pole, the needle and the young surveyor left out a strip of 960 acres of land, known to this day among the cognoscenti as the "Hamilton Wedge."

A citizen of Randolph County, "the colony of low cunning," swooped down upon it like a hawk on a chicken and grabbed it, and it made one of the prettiest lawsuits that men ever waged for the excitement of it.

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Thus in some faiths the hope of heaven is mereiy delinquent and not forfeited as other bodies hold.

This made the Smyth 31,000 the prize title of the hills. Every one of the big forfeited surveys had to give way to it. So it was treated with great respect.

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But there was one weakness about the 31,000 acres that did something to keep the owners from being too proud, and that was the fact that the beginning corner called for a cypress. Now the cypress tree grows in the swamps along the coasts. It is an evergreen. It is never found in the mountains at an altitude of 3,000 feet. So a cypress has never been found, though many a learned lawyer and many a shrewd surveyor has wondered where it could be. If found it might upset some perfectly good titles, and the country would be treated to the sight of the most respectable title in the country running amuck,

We have got a farfetched theory that the word is not cypress at all, but cippus, a term used in some regions of the United States, and which means the same thing as a "set stone," a term often found in surveys here. Be that as it may,

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But we started to talk of the Cold *& Barren* aspect of the Coal & Iron *country.* Where those great lumber *operations* were a few years ago there *is now* the wornout look that may be *seen in* the abandoned lumber lands *of Pennsylvania.* We used to think that the old tobacco lands of Tuckahoe were about the most

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It should be noted that Durbin has improved about a thousand percent, like a surviver prospering on the departure of competitors. Durbin is vastly citified and Marlinton must wake up if she is to keep the first place in the county.

UNTIL THE NEXT HARVEST

Readers, let us have your ears and